

T News Letter **DARS**

G3ZME
G6ZME

TELFORD AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

www.TDARS.org.uk

FOUNDED 1969

www.TelfordHamfest.co.uk

Issue 290

50th Anniversary 1969-2019

Sept/October 2019

www.TDARS.org.uk

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.org.uk

August 28 Final HamFest Preparations—Jobs for The Boys (and Girls). Collect kit

August 31st / September 1st Telford Buildathon & HamFest at Harper Adams Uni

September 4 Committee Meeting 8pm

September 11 SOTA—My European Tour, Paul M0PLA. Also “Wolf Wave” review

September 18 HamFest and G-QRP Buildathon De-brief

September 25 DX Commander—guest speaker— Callum M0MCX—recalled!

October 2 Committee Meeting 8pm

October 9 “High Altitude Balloon Experiments” - our own Heather M0HMO

October 16 JOTA Preparation evening (Scouts Jamboree on the Air)

October 19/20 (weekend) JOTA at Market Drayton (i/c G7LMF)

October 23 Soup and a Roll social evening

October 30 “The Royal Observation Corps” - guest speaker—Hugh Roberts

November 6 Committee Meeting

November 13 50th TDARS ANNIVERSARY MEAL at Holiday Inn, Telford. c/o M0TBQ

November 20 Surplus Sale. HamFest leftovers + Members’ sales

November 27 Winter Projects—Bring your ideas along

*For Amateur Radio Exam Training—changes Pending Sept 2019
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.
For Equipment Loans & Returns contact Don M0TBQ.*

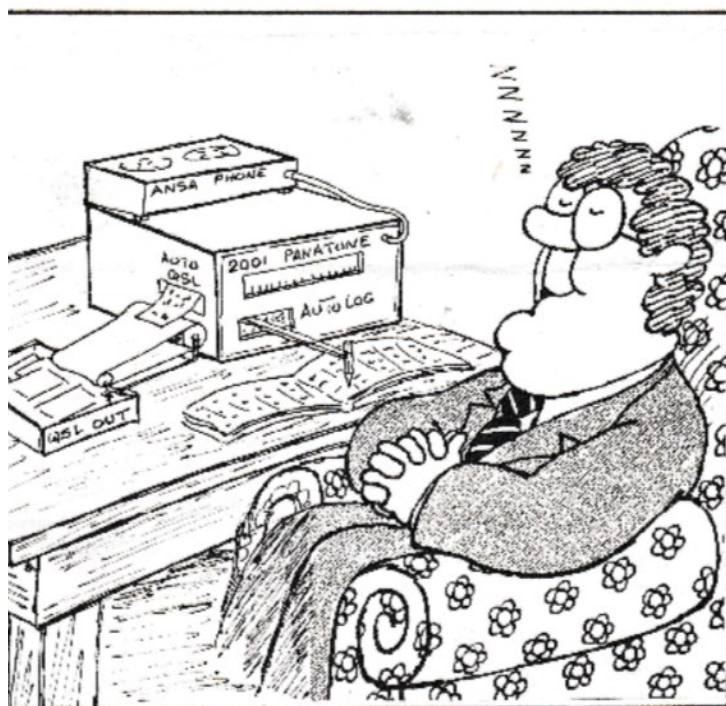
[Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html](http://www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html)

Editorial

I sometimes think we have lost the art of calling “CQ, CQ, CQ” on any band or mode. When I drive about, I usually monitor either GB3TF or 144.500 MHz FM. It remains silent for about 98% of the time, and if the squelch opens and someone appears, it is usually to call one of their mates. SOTA operators sometimes put out a general call as they need at least 4 QSOs from their chosen hilltop site to claim points, and occasionally a Special Event station GB..... calls. Having said that, I’m probably guilty of this trend as I only put out a general call a couple of times, even on a longish journey. It’s not that much better on some HF bands, particularly 80/160 metres, where regular nets dominate. Our Monday/Friday 3657KHz net used to have stations calling in regularly, but that has become most unusual in the past five years or so. Surely our hobby should be ‘open source’ - we will talk (ie communicate) with any available licensed amateur station on any band.

By the time you read this, the 41st Telford Radio Rally (re-named Telford hamFest in 2006, when its constitution changed) will have come and gone. As I write this, the outcome is unknown, but the choice of the new venue at HAU seems almost certain to be a success. With the weather forecast stated as “Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze” and a top temperature of 19C, what could possibly go wrong ? Thanks to everyone who has helped in any way– it has been quite a journey.

MIV



Someone (sorry, forgotten who) passed this cartoon to me from a 1977 Surrey radio club Newsletter a few weeks ago. Note the year. . . . and look carefully at the detail in the picture, rather than the sleeping character in the armchair. The rig, QSL card printer, tape-recorder ansaphone, log writer and so on.

*The caption below the cartoon read:
“....Running here a 2001 with auto-
tune, auto-scan, AFC, squelch and
.....ZZZZZZZ ”*

How appropriate, and suitable to the present day, given a few tech updates; but that's progress, folk.

TELFORD & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY : 2019-20

CHAIRMAN: Simon Bird G0UFE (01952 401018)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

SECRETARY: John Humphreys M0JZH (07824 737716)

TREASURER: Paul Athersmith M0PLA (07966 969230)

CURATOR : Don Nicholls M0TBQ (01952 411680)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416 or 07421 001166)

PUBLICITY/WEBMASTER : Dave GOCER (01630 638699 or 07971 416940)

Committee: Brian G6UDX; Graham G7LMF; Ian M0IRP; Village Hall Committee Liaison officer Martin 2E0TRO.
QSL Manager Paul M0PNN; Assist Curator: Chris 2E0EOH; Trophies/Certs: Martyn G3UKV.



Qtc: News & Information



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE FRONT PAGE PROGRAMME. ROOM BOOKED FROM 7PM - 10PM. MEETINGS USUALLY COMMENCE AT 8PM

Please note: A current membership card may be required to borrow TDARS equipment. Please return borrowed equipment promptly .

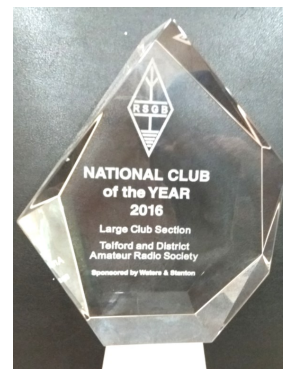
The Annual Telford Hamfest and G-QRP Convention, as well as the G-QRP Buildathon, will take place on Saturday/Sunday August 31st and 1st September 2019. You know the rest .

TDARS **50th Anniversary Dinner** due to take place on **Wednesday 13th November** at the Holiday Inn, Telford TF3 4EH. It has a 4.6 star rating and all mod cons, including a pool . Booking Forms and further details are available from Don M0TBQ. Form enclosed.

As usual, there is a full programme of events at the club, including a presentation By **Callum M0MCX**, famous for his (zany?) videos and products. If you missed his talk last year, don't miss it this time—**Wed. 25th September !** Another guest speaker this autumn is **Hugh Roberts**, a local historian, who has studied the local **Royal Observation Corps (ROC)** in this area for many years and is giving his presentation to TDARS on **Wed. 30th October**.

The **third and final Foxhunt** (DF) took place in August, with Martin 'TRO as the fox. Despite fixing the 4 club DF antennas/attenuators earlier this year, very few members have taken up the challenge this year—there were just three participants at the final session. Perhaps the leading Hound should receive a free drink at the Huntsman each time as an incentive; After all, the inn's name could hardly be more suitable !

June 15/16 was the **50 MHz Trophy Contest** weekend, but when Simon and Co arrived on the Long Mynd site on Saturday, the heavens opened, and the early arrivals were soaked through and shivering. They abandoned the hillside and returned home to dry out and let others who had not arrived on site know of their fate. This included Martyn G3UKV who wanted to air **G3Z** special contest callsign, so decided to enter the 6 hour, single op. section of this 24hr contest from home. As luck would have it, Sunday morning was the ideal time for 50MHz, and so Martyn switched on his IC756mk3, + linear (400W) and made over 100 QSOs, with a final score of 8,549,940. Best DX was TA7OM (Turkey) at 3291Km. It came as a very pleasant surprise to see the published results in July, and to win this section, which had 41 entrants.



telfordhams

Three weekends later was **VHF NFD**, also from Long Mynd. This turned out to be another winner for Telford & DARS in the Mix and Match section which is our strategically chosen section to enter. See later short article and pictures.

Two events this spring took place on **the Little Wenlock Village Field**, both benefiting from fine weather. **June 19th** was chosen to operate HF to try and QSO Paul M0PLA who was on his pan-Euro SOTA trip, incorporating the "Ham Radio Friedrichshafen" event in Germany. Several members made the trip on HF with good reports exchanged to ON. On Saturday **July 13th**, a small band of members set up a station from LWVH Field as part of the village's Summer Fair, with the emphasis on meeting folk rather than having QSOs.



From the past 2009

[illegible]

VHF NFD Mix 'N Match Section Winners—Telford & DARS July 6-7 2019

After days of very mixed weather, this weekend was kind to us, although it drizzled on Saturday afternoon after we had set up the 4 stations on 6m, 2m, 70cm and 23 cm.

Things went pretty much to plan, although the visit from a National Trust warden never materialised. The brand new 'Gobi' tent was excellent—lots of space and purchased at the right price. Two of these have been purchased, and should see us fixed for /P for years to come.

All 4 stations were ready for the start of the contest at 14:00 (UTC), and the Hills were Alive with the Sound of— - - - “CQ Contest, CQ Contest . . .”

24 hours later, closedown and all those members/friends on-site gathered round one of the mobile towers for a group photo taken by Paul's drone. Once home, logs were scrutinised closely and errors corrected and finally emailed to the RSGB Contest committee. Five weeks later, the results were published—and ... (roll of drums ...) we were top of the table in the Mix & Match section. PERFECT! - with a margin of almost 450 points over the runner-up (Northern Fells CG). The last time we won this section was in 2016, and we slipped to 2nd and 4th in 2017, 2018 respectively. It was pleasing to note our error rate (ie points taken off for logging errors) was minimal this year—well done operators and loggers. We were top-dogs on both 70 and 23cm, and third on 6m. 2m had a pleasing 267 QSOs, and came 7th in their 'R' section.

50MHz: (R) 3rd of 20. 84 QSOs, 16265pts, 644 pts normalised. Best DX S52FO 1429Km
144MHz: (R) 7th of 19. 267 QSOs, 51058pts, 514pts normalised. Best DX DL0XS 837Km
432MHz (L) 1st of 6. 74 QSOs, 14172pts, 1000pts normalised. Best DX DL5DAW 716Km
1296MHz (L) 1st of 5. 48 QSOs, 9364pts, 1000pts normalised. Best DX DF0MU 693Km



Unfortunately the Group photo taken by Paul's drone came out poorly, and is therefore not reproduced here.



Paul's (M0PLA) European Tour and SOTA exploits

Throughout 2019, Paul has continued his Summits on the Air ("SOTA") outings—and no more so than during his visit to the Frierichshafen Ham Show in June. Taking their own vehicle, Paul and Michelle roamed northern Europe from Belgium to the northern shores of Lake Bodensee in southern Germany (also known as L. Constance). Paul has blogged his exploits day-by-day on the TDARS Reflector since his return, and it would take umpteen pages of this Newsletter to report on each and every SOTA summit as well as their travels. Instead, come to the TDARS meeting on September 11th to hear the story. Here are a few shots >>



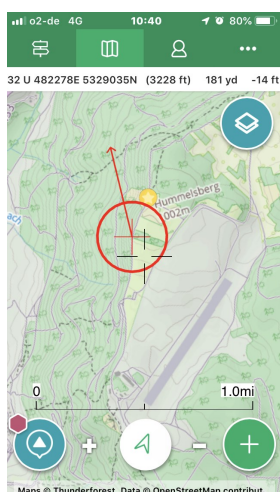
June 19—ON/M0PLA log to TDARS at LWV Field—20m

Time	Call	Band	Mode	
18:36z	M0JZH/P	14MHz	SSB	John
18:37z	G0UFE/P	14MHz	SSB	Simon
18:40z	M0HMO/P	14MHz	SSB	Heather
18:40z	G7LMF/P	14MHz	SSB	Graham
18:43z	G8AQA/P	14MHz	SSB	Paul
18:45z	G000Q	14MHz	SSB	Sean
18:50z	2E0TRO/P	14MHz	SSB	Martin
18:53z	G3UKV/P	14MHz	SSB	Martyn
18:56z	G3JKX/P	14MHz	SSB	Mike

Paul's blogs can be found starting at:

<https://m0pla.blogspot.com/2019/07/sota-european-tour-2019-day-1.html>

Day 6 mapping >>



Thanks for Newsletter input this time:

**Mike G3JKX, Paul M0PLA, Bob M0RJS, Don M0TBQ,
Heather M0HMO, David M0YDH, Mike G6DFD**

Next edition Nov. / December : 2019

“Sheep Worrier” - HAB - High Altitude Balloon Project
—e-mail extracts from Heather M0HMO

[Ed—Heather has circulated some details about her HAB launches and experiments—dated as follows. See also www.myorangedragon.com under Amateur Radio < HAB

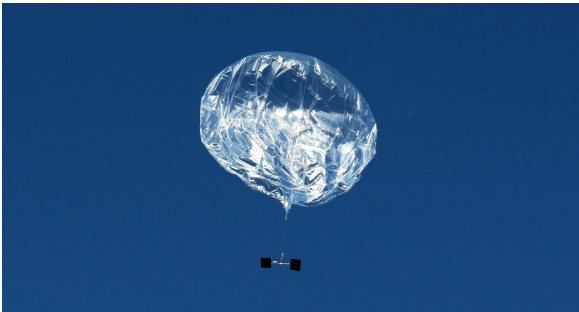
17 June 2019 mail

“Our first balloon launch date (for the High Altitude Balloon project) is set for Saturday. 9:30am at our farm, Holy Mill. If that has to be cancelled we have the option of trying again on Sunday. (22/23 June – Ed)

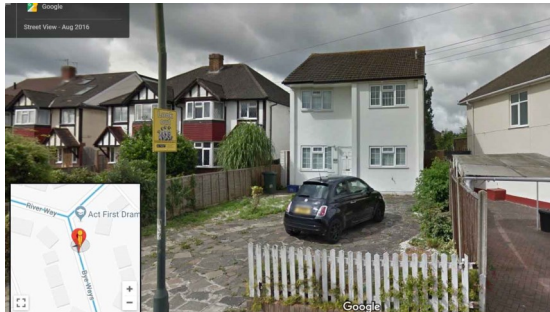
Anyone who would like to chase it (in a car, so you will need a mobile station with 70cm USB receive and a laptop to decode the RTTY) is welcome to come along, please let me know and I will send loads more details to you off the reflector. Similarly, if anyone wants to try tracking it from home then I can send setup details.

For those who don't know about balloon chasing, it basically involves using a 70cm USB rig to receive USB audio (from the transmitter attached to the balloon), pass this to a laptop/PC via the audio input of the PC, decode the RTTY and then feeding the GPS co-ords that gives you into a satnav and driving around the country following the balloon.

As the decoding happens it is also possible to set up the PC to send the locations to a central HAB tracking server that will display the balloon's path on a map for everyone to see. Once the balloon gets to about 33Km altitude it should burst and the payload will come down by parachute. If we are close enough to it when it lands we will be able to receive the RTTY on the ground and recover it (it is a 10mW transmitter so very little range when not line of sight). The payload has all sorts of sensors and a camera for the "edge of space" photos we hope it will take so we really want to get it back. Past chases have been incredibly good fun, last about 4 hours till the payload lands and never go according to plan so plenty of excitement. “



Typical HAB in flight. (AMSAT image)



Google Streetview of where it landed in a London backstreet!

16 July 2019 mail

“ It was a great fun day, with numerous people helping out.. In the end we had 3 chase cars, various people chasing from home, and even, on the way home, some nice Sunday roast to finish the day off!

It is a work in progress but should give a good impression of what we got up too, what we achieved, and what you missed!!! All the pics (from the payload anyway) are full size so they will take a while to load but once loaded you can view them at original resolution. Finally I got my pictures from the edge of space!

For those who haven't been involved it was a great fun day out driving round the countryside (or sitting at home with your base station) using amateur radio to receive the RTTY from the balloon and relaying the data onto the internet so all the other chase cars and viewers can see it and intercept it when it lands! We had people tracking it from as far away as the Netherlands and parts of France. All that is needed to track it is a computer running dl-fldigi, a radio capable of receiving 70cm USB (the 6 pounds blue RTL-SDR works really well for this attached to a home made 1/4 wave vertical on a 3 inch magmount) and a way of getting the audio tones from the radio into the dl-fldigi program.

We are already planning the next launch, let me know if you are interested in taking part. If anyone needs help getting set up to receive it the next time then do let me know and I'll help get you set up. “

Heather

~+

How it all started By Mike Street G3JKX

Near the end of the war, a Great-Uncle bought me the parts to make a crystal set, complete with a piece of Galena and with a cats whisker as a detector and with a new pair of S.G.Brown's high Impedance headphones.(which I still have). There was a diagram to follow and I soon had it completed.. Then put up an aerial from my bedroom window to a tree across the lawn. Didn't work though, so I took it all to bits, rebuilt it and still no joy. 'Might be the aerial ?' I surmised.

I soon realised that when joining short lengths of wire to make it long enough to reach the tree, one has to remove the insulation before tying knots in the wire! Boy - did the set work well then. A loud American voice was describing events in the USA and I proudly announced at the dining table that I could receive America on my crystal set. The assembled family smiled and never said that I was listening to Alistair Cook's "Letter from America" programme on the BBC Light programme, on 1500 metres Long Wave. (as I discovered later)

I loved that crystal set and made the aerial even longer with a better earth and could hear several medium wave stations on a medium wave coil I had wound on a cardboard tube from a loo roll. Then in 1948, I came home from school one day to be told by my mother that she had ‘dusted my crystal set’.

I ran upstairs to my room to be confronted with the sight of medium wave coil spread out all over my table. The sellotape I had used to stick the ends of the coil to the cardboard had 'failed'. Catastrophe? No. Clamping the headphones on my head I was surprised to hear "G3EFP this is G8VB over" I then enjoyed a long one - sided conversation between the two all about radio. The signal from G8VB was really strong and could hear a very loud hum when he turned his transmitter on. Innocently I put the coil back as it was before and I now could not hear their daily contacts. I thought that G8VB must be fairly close to me. So, riding my huge delivery bicycle, I toured the area looking for an aerial and eventually saw a mast sticking up and a wire leading from it into the adjoining house. Parking the bike, I walked up to the door and knocked.

"Are you G8VB ?" I asked the elderly gentleman who had opened the door. Grabbing me by the tie and a bit of shirt he walked me into his house and into large room covered wall to wall with racks and panels full of meters and a huge microphone standing on a table next to a glowing RCA radio set. He wanted to know how I knew his callsign and I told him my story. He then explained what amateur radio was, and about the licence needed, - the exam and the 12wpm morse code needed to obtain one. That was it. I wanted some of this. but how?

I eventually saw an advertisement in our daily paper for RAF Air Radio Apprentices who could join up at only 15 years of age.

Secretly I wrote to the Air Ministry, attended RAF Halton for the entrance exams and a very intensive medical.

I passed and some time later a large package from the RAF for my father gave the game away. I needn't have worried as my dad was pleased by my initiative. So off I went to RAF Cranwell where G8FC, the HQ station of RAFARS was. Regular visits there during my time there taught me a lot. However, after the whole school was moved to RAF Locking, we apprentices started our own club, G3IDZ and, being trained as Radio Fitters were exempt from taking the licence exam. I had learnt morse code in the Scouts and the morse instructor on camp was pleased my fellows in the club and I wanted to get to 12 words a minute, just for fun. We all passed eventually and got our licences. Most of our spare time was now spent trying out different aerials, operating or building CW transmitters. I learnt more about radio doing this than I did at the radio school!

So here I am 63 years later still enjoying being an amateur but now lay down my role as TDARS tutor and to get down, at long last, to sorting out my shack, make a few things and to operate a little more. It has been a great ride so far. **73 Mike G3JKX**

[Most interesting bit of History, Mike. A very sincere thanks for all you've done for Amateur Radio—especially the umpteen hours you've given over the years in training and preparing prospective listeners into our wonderful hobby. — Ed]

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